

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 192 310

CS 205 824

AUTHOR Miyamura, Candace P.
 TITLE Building Communicative Competence in the Bilingual/Bidialectal Classroom.
 PUB DATE Nov 79
 NOTE 39p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English (69th, San Francisco, CA, November 22-24, 1979).
 EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
 DESCRIPTORS Bilingual Students; Black Dialects; Communication Problems; *Communication Skills; *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Differences; Elementary Secondary Education; Language Skills; *Linguistic Competence; *Minority Group Children; Sociolinguistics; Speech Communication; *Teacher Responsibility
 IDENTIFIERS *Intercultural Communication

ABSTRACT

Cultures differ in rules that govern communicative behavior, and these differences can cause teacher/student miscommunication in the classroom and can also interfere with the academic performance of minority group children. These differences can be overcome, however, by knowledgeable teachers who endeavor to build and expand the communicative competence of minority group children. Teachers can accomplish this by fostering children's ethnic identity and pride while expanding their communication skills to include those of the dominant culture. To achieve this, teachers should provide a broad range of experiences to expose children to the full repertoire of communicative strategies and rules as they are defined by each culture. Teachers should also provide activities that expand children's social sensitivity and metalinguistic awareness and that afford opportunities to practice newly acquired dominant culture skills. The goal is to produce individuals who are capable of functioning in two realms and who feel comfortable in both. (FL)

 * Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
 * from the original document. *

ED192310.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Building Communicative Competence in the
Bilingual/Bidialectal Classroom

Candace P. Miyamura

College of Education

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Candace P. Miyamura

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Communicative Competence in the Bidialectal Classroom

CS25824

Building Communicative Competence in the Bilingual/Bidialectal Classroom

Communicative competence is the ability to formulate and produce messages that effectively and accurately convey the locutionary force (semantic content) and the illocutionary force (psychological intent) of one's communicative efforts and the concomitant ability to appropriately interpret messages produced by others. Communicative competence relies on the ability to apply the appropriate communicative strategies to the appropriate situations and rests on the assumption that language and other communicative behaviors are situation specific, i.e., cannot be correctly interpreted without reference to the situation in which they occur. Cultures vary in their repertoire of communicative strategies and in the rules that specify what behaviors are appropriate in what situations. Because of these differences in communicative norms, we frequently experience difficulty in communicating with people from other cultures. It is for this reason that minority children and their teachers occasionally experience communication problems, and these problems in turn interfere with school performance. In this paper a few examples of teacher-pupil miscommunication resulting from cultural differences in communicative behavior will be provided and then some strategies will be proposed that can be applied in the bilingual/bidialectal classroom to assuage the problems and help minority children acquire the communicative competence they need to successfully function in

the school and work settings. In this paper communicative competence will be interpreted broadly to include both verbal and nonverbal behavior that occur in communicative events.

In communicative competence the ability to apply situationally appropriate strategies both in production and comprehension requires the consideration of the physical and social setting in which the communicative event occurs and also the characteristics of the people with whom one is communicating (Hymes, 1972). An appropriate strategy is then selected in accordance with the co-occurrence rules of the culture that determine what type of behavior is appropriate in that particular situation (Ervin-Tripp, 1972). In consideration of the first factor, physical setting, individuals behave differently depending on whether they are sitting in the bleachers of a football stadium or in a pew of a church. In dominant American culture the football situation may elicit wild, frequently flamboyant gestures accompanied by loud, informal, and occasionally profane speech. The church situation may constrain individuals to sit nearly motionless and speak, if at all, in muffled tones. Quiet and reserved behavior at football games indicates boredom, emotional distress, or several other interpretations delimited by the dominant culture. Such behavior is not usually interpreted as rudeness or an indication of verbal deficiency,

although those interpretations are culturally correct for similar behavior in other situations. With regard to the church setting, profanity is, at best, rude and quite possibly sacreligious.

In consideration of the second factor, social setting, effective communicators correctly identify the social occasion and respond appropriately. A formal dinner party prompts individuals of the dominant culture to employ their most proper speech characterized by an abundance of Latinate, multisyllabic vocabulary and unusually clear enunciation. In contrast, an informal picnic with close friends would probably induce these same individuals to opt for words of Germanic origin over words of Latin origin and to speak faster and less distinctly. To speak informally at a dinner party might lead others to consider one a boor; to employ predominately multisyllable words at a picnic may label one a stuffed shirt.

In consideration of the third factor, characteristics of the intercommunicators, people take note of the age, sex, status, and needs of those with whom they are interacting. With age peers, individuals from the dominant culture usually use and expect to receive fairly informal speech. With elders they use more polite, formal behavior, but are willing to receive either reciprocated formal patterns or non-reciprocal informal behavior (Ervin-Tripp, 1972). When individuals use formal language with age peers they

are frequently considered stuffy; when a younger person addresses an older person informally that younger person could be considered lacking in manners.

Just as relative age affects the quality of communication, so does the sex and relative status of the inter-communicators. Speech between like-sex communication partners is generally more informal than that between opposite-sex communication partners. Language directed upward in status is more polite than language directed downward in status (Ervin-Tripp, 1974, 1976).

In addition to considering age, sex, and status, effective communicators also take into account the needs of those with whom they are interacting. They consider the linguistic and cognitive abilities of others, the degree of shared knowledge, the relative perspective of others, etc., and modify their messages and shift their expectations accordingly. When describing an incident to people who were not there to observe it, for example, most adults in the dominant culture speak in more explicit terms and are more tolerant of questions requiring a recount of events than when speaking to people who were there.

Each factor noted above constitutes but one bit of information that is placed into communicative formulas to compute appropriate strategies. The effects of the factors are not independent, but

rather interactional. For instance, status factors may be tempered by similarity in age or informal social settings; sex factors may be accentuated by age or status differences.

All the sociolinguistic rules that govern the language usage pattern of any given individual are mastered initially at a sub-conscious level. Few people other than professional sociolinguists are consciously aware of the rules that govern their communicative behavior, and even sociolinguists could not enumerate all the rules. Unlike many aspects of grammar and phonology, most sociolinguistic rules are not customarily discussed metalinguistically. Whereas we frequently comment on a child's inability to produce a particular phoneme or a person's propensity for certain nonstandard grammatical structures, we rarely, if ever, objectively comment on an individual's acquisition of sociolinguistic rules. Because we are aware of differences in phonology and syntax among various dialects and languages, we can understand and to some extent sympathize with phonological and syntactic interference experience by others. We fully realize and anticipate that children coming from homes in which a language or dialect other than standard English is spoken will experience difficulty producing and distinguishing standard English sounds and controlling and interpreting standard English grammar. While we may be far more sympathetic to the foreign

language-speaking child than to the dialect-speaking child, in both cases we are aware of the potential problems. With regards to rules of language use, however, we operate under the untenable assumption that all cultures share the same rules. Perhaps this assumption stems from the fact that we adhere to the rules with little conscious effort and later language instruction in the schools does little to promote any metalinguistic awareness of the subject. Whatever the reason, we tend to consider patterns of communicative interaction to be determined by human nature rather than by culturally specific rules. We fail to see that, like the phonological and syntactic systems we use, the sociolinguistic system we acquire depends on the community in which we are raised and therefore may differ from culture to culture (Applegate, 1975).

If the general populace and the academic community acknowledged and understood that cultures differ in sociolinguistic rules, the problems would not be as pronounced as they are. It is precisely the insidious nature of the problem that has created the greatest difficulty. Since most people operate under the assumption that rules of language use are universal, we apply the same set of rules of production and comprehension to all communication situations, regardless of the cultural background of the inter-communicators. Thus we fail to alter the form of our message to others and

concomitantly fail to alter or adjust our interpretation system when dealing with people from other cultures. Due to this failure to adjust we frequently project an unclear message which can be easily misinterpreted by others, and by the same token, we frequently incorrectly interpret messages transmitted to us by others (Gumperz, 1964; Hymes, 1961, 1972; Gumperz & Hernandez-Chavez, 1972). This is true whether we are members of the dominant American culture or one of the subcultures.

As suggested before, violations of the rules are as culturally governed as adherence to the rules. Under certain circumstances we may intentionally break a rule to convey a particular meaning. Thus individuals from the dominant culture may purposely use polite, formal language with a close friend to convey anger or irritation. The choice of polite formal language for that purpose is culturally determined, and the interpretation of anger is culturally determined. Other cultures may use different forms to convey the same intent or use the same forms to convey different intent. Thus when two people from different cultures interact, rules are unintentionally broken, but both people interpret the meaning of the breaks in terms of their own cultural norms. It is precisely this ethnocentric attitude we all take to sociolinguistic behavior that leads to cross-cultural miscommunication. To illustrate this point, let us consider

some examples.

In interpersonal interaction a significant portion of the message we project is conveyed through nonverbal channels. We employ haptics (touching), proxemics (orientation in space), and kinesics (body movements) to convey an entire message or to illustrate, emphasize, or alter the interpretation of utterances that accompany them (Birdwhistell, 1970; McDavid, 1969; Schefflen, 1974). Different cultures adhere to different norms that govern nonverbal behavior, and these differences can lead to cross-cultural miscommunication (Abrahams, 1973; Brend, 1978; Johnson, 1970, 1971; Kochman, 1979, 1971, McDavid, 1969; Schefflen, 1974; Williams, 1972).

In the realms of haptics, for example, Kochman (1969) noted that blacks seem to touch each other more than do whites. The same can be said of Latins and many Eastern European Jews (Kochman, 1971; Schefflen, 1974). In cross-cultural interaction, people from these minority cultures may be labeled as pushy or overly familiar by members of the dominant culture who are in turn viewed as excessively aloof. Also in the realm of haptics, Johnson (1970) reported that in situations of stress, blacks tend to interpret any physical contact as an act of aggression, whereas members of the dominant culture interpret the situation as one in which a light pat on the shoulder can be used as a reconciliatory measure.

Different cultures also have different rules of proxemics (Kochman, 1969; Scheflen, 1974). Universally, posture, orientation, and distance are manipulated to express varying degrees of involvement (Scheflen, 1974), but the precise rules are culture-specific. Generally speaking, Arabs, Latins, and Eastern European Jews prefer to stand closer to each other than do people of northern European origin (Kochman, 1971; Scheflen, 1974). When members of the dominant culture have their personal space violated, they tend to attribute the transgressor with characteristics such as pushiness or over-familiarity. Minority individuals in turn characterize members of the dominant culture as cold and aloof when they back away from them.

In the classroom rules of proxemics are very important. For example, all cultures use posture and orientation to convey respect and attentiveness to speakers. In the dominant culture, attentive audiences sit fairly erect and orient their eyes and bodies in the direction of the speaker. Deviation is interpreted as an indication of inattention, boredom, rudeness, or scorn (Scheflen, 1974). Yet Williams (1972) observed that black audiences use different behavior to demonstrate interest and respect. A black audience that is totally tuned in to a speaker may be seen to position themselves with bodies and eyes directed away from the speaker.

While all cultures employ kinesics to convey messages, the specific rules are again culturally determined. Generally speaking, the dominant American culture does not indulge in a great deal of movement during most social situations. For this reason the movements and gestures characteristic of other cultures are considered flamboyant or, at best, distracting. "Stand still," "stop flailing your arms," "I bet you couldn't talk if someone tied your hands" are comments that are likely to be directed at individuals who employ more body movement than the dominant culture deems appropriate. Many subcultures in the United States, however, employ pronounced kinesics as a matter of course. In the black culture in particular, it is vital for social success to be able to perform the right gestures to accompany the right talk (Abrahams, 1973).

While pimp walks and soul handshakes of the black culture are perhaps among the most obvious culturally unique kinesic forms produced by members of a minority culture, they actually result in few miscommunication episodes precisely because they are so well known and because no dominant culture counterparts exist with which they can be easily confused. The problem arises when kinesic forms are part of the repertoires of different cultures but convey different meanings in those cultures. For example, in face-to-face interaction in the dominant culture it is rude for listeners to

turn their backs to a person addressing them. Yet in the black cultures such a gesture is frequently used to display friendliness approval, and trust (Williams, 1972; Johnson, 1971).

Another aspect of kinesics is eye contact. Eye contact is used to gain attention or show attentiveness. Byers and Byers (1972) video-taped a middle class white child and a lower class black child as they interacted with a white teacher. In a 33-minute period the white child glanced at the teacher 14 times and achieved eye contact 8 of those times, while the black child glanced at the teacher 35 times and achieved eye contact only on 4 occasions. Byers and Byers hypothesized that the difference between the two children was related to the ability to anticipate behavior. The white child watched the teacher-pupil communication in which she was not involved in order to anticipate opportunities for interruption and timed her glances with the pauses and searching behavior of the teacher; the black child engaged in neither of these activities. This may have been due to the cultural differences in nonverbal communication systems that prevented the black child from adequately interpreting situations and using them to her advantage. Whatever the reason, it is obvious that if this finding is indicative of what goes on in ordinary classrooms, it could be one of the factors that causes black children to become apathetic, if not hostile, toward an

environment in which they are ignored.

In moving from the topic of nonverbal behavior to verbal behavior, audience participation as a communicative strategy should be discussed because it incorporates aspects of both. The dominant culture demands that members of an audience be quiet and inactive except on those occasions when questions and comments are solicited or when laughter or nods of agreement are appropriate (Schefflen, 1974). Unsolicited feedback is often interpreted as a threat (Abrahams, 1973). In contrast, the black culture interprets public speaking as a participatory rather than a spectator sport. An attentive audience may clap, nod, sway, chant, talk to others, turn around in their seats, etc. (Kochman, 1972; Williams, 1972). The restrained behavior of the dominant culture is viewed as lack of involvement by blacks, while the black behavior is viewed as disrespectful by members of the dominant culture.

As can be seen, black cultural rules for audience participation are inappropriate for most dominant culture speech situations. This is particularly true of the classroom which has traditionally required children to be quiet and passive. One can imagine that in an attempt to please the teacher black children may begin to actively interact with the teacher during a lesson. The teacher may label the behavior disruptive and reprimand the children. Prevented from

engaging in the type of behavior that they associate with attentiveness, the children may lose interest and fail to attend to the lesson. In addition, the hostile behavior that they encounter from the teacher alienates them from the classroom. As a defensive measure, they retreat into silence or develop defiant attitudes that often lead to disciplinary problems.

Abrahams (1973) described a hypothetical incident that illustrated cultural differences in the role of audience participation that created misunderstanding between a boy and his teacher. As stated previously, talking is viewed by the black community as a performance during which the speaker and listener engage in lively interaction. Thus, in the black culture, one is not truly talking unless one has the attention of at least one listener. The dominant culture, of course, defines talking as the audible production of words, regardless of whether anyone is listening to what is said. Ignorant of these differences in definition, a white female teacher in the incident described said to a black boy who in her eyes was being disruptive by verbally expressing himself and adding to the general uproar of the classroom, "Stop talking." The meaning of the statement was "Stop making that noise." The black student responded, "I wasn't talking" because his speech had failed to attract any listeners and therefore, in his eyes, could not be classified as talk. The teacher

interpreted the child's statement as insolence and reprimanded the child for daring to contradict her.

While the dominant culture tolerates less active audiences participation than does the black culture, other groups may tolerate even less. In classrooms of Japanese-American children the teacher may become exasperated because repeated attempts to elicit questions and discussion fail (Applegate, 1975). The quiescent profile of the students may be related to the Japanese tradition of respectful submission in the presence of authority figures (Berwick, 1975). Similar behavior has been observed with some groups of American Indians, although for different reasons (Philips, 1972a, 1972b).

Miscommunication may also take place on a strictly verbal plane. Applegate (1975) in a discussion of foreign language speakers noted the necessity of knowing "the rules of speaking" that apply in the second language culture:

And even if the student can pronounce his second language correctly and put words together in the proper order, he still has to use the language like a native. He must know when to talk and when to keep silent, how loud to talk and with what intonation, what constitutes a polite request and what a refusal, how to initiate a conversation and how to end one,

when to interpret an utterance literally and when to take it as a formulaic convention, and so on. (p. 217)

The same point can be made about individuals learning a second dialect. When two cultures do not share the same sociolinguistic rules of language usage, conflict can occur through unintentional violations of those rules. As stated earlier, different physical settings require different types of speech. For the dominant culture the school setting calls for relatively formal speech. Kochman (1972) hypothesized, however, that that same setting is interpreted as an informal speech situation by urban black children, and therefore to them slang or profanity is not out of place. The dominant culture, interpreting the behavior through its own framework, labels black children's behavior as appalling.

Physical and social settings can influence not only the type of language used but also the quantity of language produced. Despite the fact that children from all cultures develop verbal facility in their native language or dialect at about the same rate, many minority children fail to display their linguistic talents in the classroom. Their reluctance to perform is frequently misinterpreted as linguistic deficiency by their teachers, but evidence seems to support an alternate interpretation. Observation of children in home or playground situations reveals that these so-called

nonverbal children are highly verbal outside of the classroom (Labov, 1969). This would seem to indicate that for these children the classroom setting defines a situation in which the amount of speech is to be kept to a minimum. Such is probably the case with Asian-American, Latin-American, Appalachian, and American Indian children (Applegate, 1975; Philips, 1972a, 1972b). Since the school setting fails to provide situations in which minority children are prompted by their cultural norms to produce their best and most fluent language, they unintentionally project the image of nonverbal or educationally handicapped children.

There is some evidence that the mere fact that the school experience involves interaction with strangers from another culture is sufficient to suppress verbal output. Pasamanick and Knobloch (1955) presented evidence that poor language performance and poor verbal responsiveness may result when children are aware that the authority figure is of a different racial background. Schatzman and Strauss (1955) hypothesized that the greater proficiency in relating narrative information by middle class children over lower class children in their study was partially attributable to the fact that the interviewer was middle class. Basso (1970) found that some groups of American Indians also respond to strangers with silence.

A child's failure to correctly interpret a verbal prompt may also affect school performance. Consider the use of questions in the educational setting. Most middle class children know that questions such as "Can you describe what's going on in this picture?" call for more than a yes/no response and that in addition, a rather extended display of knowledge is being requested. Minority children may not make the same interpretation and therefore may give a minimal response (Baratz, 1970; Labov, 1969).

In addition to sociolinguistic rules that dictate different verbal behavior, an additional factor may need to be considered when discussing the low verbal productivity of minority children in the classroom. When children enter a classroom world in which they do not know the sociolinguistic rules, they frequently respond in a manner which is considered to be inappropriate by the teacher. In such instances the teacher's response is likely to be negative. After a number of unsuccessful attempts to comply with the rules of the classroom, these children may eventually withdraw from classroom interaction.

Cultural differences in the use of paralinguistic features such as volume, tone, prosody, etc. is yet another factor that leads to miscommunication in the classroom. The dominant American culture, for example, tolerates only a limited range in voice volume in

normal speech situations. As a consequence, black children are frequently stereotyped as loud and disruptive while Asian children are considered shy and withdrawn because these two cultures prefer a different volume range (Applegate, 1975).

These are only a few examples of cross-cultural conflict that can affect the school performance of minority children. Many more areas of potential conflict could be enumerated, but they are beyond the scope of this paper. The focus of this paper is on procedures for building the communicative competence of bilingual and bidialectal children rather than over-emphasizing and belaboring their apparent deficiencies when operating in the school setting.

The first step in building the communicative competence of minority children begins with the teacher. Teachers in bilingual/bidialectal classrooms must possess qualities that are not essential in teachers in regular classrooms. Before teachers can be sensitive to the unique communicative problems that face children who straddle two cultures, they must develop a keen understanding of the sociolinguistic rules of both cultures. In other words, teachers must be more knowledgeable than the general populace because they must be able to consciously and objectively analyze the two communicative systems to outline the rules of each and to identify the similarities and differences.

But sheer knowledge is not enough. Effective educators must also be sensitive to and sympathetic of the plight of minority children. They must be aware of the added burden that is placed on minority children who must function in a classroom where dominant culture sociolinguistic rules apply. Whereas all children need to make adjustments to the new demands of school, minority children are required to make more adjustments in more drastic ways.

In addition to knowledge and understanding of different sociolinguistic frameworks, teachers must also bring to the bilingual/bidialectal classroom a sincere appreciation of the cultures from which their students come. Individuals who do not believe in a pluralistic American society or who express disdain for cultures other than their own probably do not belong in a bilingual/bidialectal classroom. Teachers who do not honestly believe in the worth of alternative value systems and communicative systems cannot possibly create an atmosphere of true acceptance for minority children and their cultures. The tacit rejection that is surely felt by the children, alienates them more from the already foreign, and in many ways unpleasant, classroom environment.

The teacher attitudes and knowledge discussed above are vital to success. No program for building communicative competence in the bilingual/bidialectal classroom could possibly succeed without

well-informed, sympathetic teachers. Since children are immature and for the most part incapable of appreciating the communicative problems and social complexities of cross-cultural interaction, the burden of successful, pleasant classroom interaction rests with the teacher. Most teachers, to be sure, can and will rise to the occasion.

Once the teachers have the requisite knowledge and the proper attitude, the work of building the communicative competence of their students can begin. There are two facets of a program for bilingual/bidialectal classrooms. One facet is facilitating the acquisition of each child's own native system. The other facet is introducing the minority children to the communicative system of the dominant culture and assisting these children in acquiring that system along with the knowledge of when to code switch from one system to the other. This two-part framework is based on the idea of multicultural education, that is, education that functions to acquaint the minority child with the dominant culture while at the same time preserve and foster that child's own ethnic identity and pride.

Both facets of the program should be based on the manner in which all children acquire their native sociolinguistic system. In this way, the program can work in tandem with the natural learning strategies of the children. At this point I would like to briefly discuss that natural acquisition process.

The natural acquisition process within one's own native community is a process that continues throughout one's entire life, but let us consider as our model the maximally competent communicator. Maximally competent communicators have mastered all the registers and nonverbal strategies of their community and have also acquired all the co-occurrence rules. Incomplete mastery of either skill reduces communicative competence. Without knowledge of all the available communicative alternatives, a situation may arise in which an individual does not command the appropriate strategy. However, complete mastery of all the strategies is useless unless the rules that specify when to apply them are also mastered.

Acquisition of communicative competence relies on several factors, some related to human development and some related to experience. Certain developmental stages must be achieved before maximal competence is possible, but at the same time experience with interpersonal communication is also vital.

The ability to scan the communicative situation, weigh important factors, select a strategy based on the input, and successfully employ that strategy requires several skills. One such skill is metalinguistic awareness, the ability to analyze the linguistic environment. Some aspects of metalinguistic awareness emerge early, but the average elementary school child is still incapable of objectively evaluating many language phenomena (Gardner, Winner, Bechhofer

and Wolf, 1978). Another requisite skill is the ability to simultaneously process a number of different factors such as physical setting, social setting, needs of participants, etc. Processing capacity increases with age, but is not adult-like until adolescence, therefore communicative competence should not be expected to reach adult levels until that time (Case, 1974; Miller, 1956; Pascual-Leone, 1969; Piaget, 1950). Young children may be able to process two or three factors, but it is doubtful that they can simultaneously consider all the complexities of many communication situations. The ability to systematically analyze and weigh factors is another requisite skill, and children may not possess that ability in its adult form until early adolescence (Piaget, 1950). Finally the ability to consider the viewpoint of others is necessary to select a communicative strategy that is appropriate for a particular situation. The egocentric nature of early childhood thought and language, however, may hinder the children's attempts to gauge the needs or expectations of others when selecting their communicative strategies (Piaget, 1955).

In addition to these developmental skills, effective communicators must also have a broad range of experience to permit exposure to and acquisition of the cultural repertoire of strategies and the accompanying co-occurrence rules. Children are obviously limited in experience because their worlds are still limited, but adults may also be lacking in this area. Unless one has been to a formal dinner party, a football game, a church service, etc., one cannot be expected to

master the productive side of communicative competence. Once the requisite developmental skills have been achieved, it is through observing, performing, and listening to tutorage from others that full competence is achieved.

With this knowledge of the necessary developmental skills and experience, educators can provide activities that improve the communicative competence of all students. The techniques would be based on the natural acquisition process. Working within the cognitive limitations of the children, teachers can provide activities that help children decenter and become less egocentric in the Piagetian sense (Piaget, 1950, 1955). Opportunities to interact with peers in situations where roles are reciprocal or can be reversed help children develop the ability to take another person's point of view and become sensitive to the needs of others. Telling each other stories could be an activity which alerts children to the importance of considering the degree of shared knowledge and other needs of the people with whom they are interacting. Activities that require a variety of communicative behaviors help children become aware that behavior must change when situations change and thus build metalinguistic awareness. Teachers can vary the communicative constraints throughout the day by creating situations requiring listening, group discussion, speaking in front of the class, peer interaction, adult-child interaction, and many other situations that demand different

communicative strategies from the children. These activities prompt the children to consider which aspects of the situation, physical setting, social setting, characteristics of others, etc., are critical for defining a particular communication situation and help the children develop the monitoring and processing skills required to consider all the important factors. These activities also provide the vital experience children need to acquire a broad repertoire of behaviors.

The limitations of child thought processes and social experience are always taken into consideration, so performance is expected to be less than perfect. This is especially true in the primary grades where many minority children have not yet had enough exposure to dominant cultural norms to have acquired those behaviors considered appropriate in the classroom. In fact, throughout the elementary grades it is vital that room be made somewhere in the school day for use of the native systems of the minority children. There are several reasons for this. Besides the fact that children may not have acquired the complete dominant culture repertoire and therefore cannot deal exclusively in the dominant culture framework, there is the matter of self-concept. The behavior patterns that minority children bring to school are integral parts of their cultural heritage and are closely associated in the children's minds with home, family, and community. A healthy attitude of cultural pride and self-acceptance can only be fostered in an environment in which those behaviors are

appreciated and accepted. Thus, whereas the classroom situation may not be one in which minority cultural patterns are directly instructed, it should be one that does not suppress or denigrate those patterns. For these reasons, minority children, particularly in the primary grades, should be allowed to use their native system if that is the one in which they feel most comfortable and can best express themselves. Thus if the use of informal language in the classroom is what allows black children to best display their knowledge and interest, then they should be allowed to use it. If silent submission is the behavior with which some Asian-American and Appalachian children feel most comfortable, then perhaps they should not be required to engage in the discussion groups and other activities that work so well with children from the dominant culture but violate Asian-American and Appalachian cultural norms. An alternative would be to restructure the classroom so that it takes on the characteristics of a situation in which the children would naturally perform in the desired manner (Berwick, 1975). Such a solution was employed to encourage American Indian children to participate in school activities (Philips, 1972a, 1972b). Whatever the strategy employed, there should be some attempt in the early grades to flow with the cultural patterns of the children. To force them to abandon familiar ways of behaving before they feel comfortable in the foreign culture of the classroom and before they have acquired an alternate system by which they can express themselves

equally as well, makes minority children feel insecure or inadequate.

As teachers provide experiences that build the native communicative competence of the children and permit the children to adjust to the school setting, they simultaneously prepare the children to learn a new parallel system. Adherence to the rules of a parallel system requires the same cognitive demands, social sensitivity, and metalinguistic awareness as adherence to the rules of the children's primary system. These skills are simply transferred to a new learning situation.

Note that the goal here is envisioned as the development of two parallel systems, rather than the replacement of the minority system with that of the dominant culture. This is the same idea that has been proposed by those involved in teaching English as a second language or teaching standard English in the urban schools except that this proposal deals with rules of language usage and other communicative behavior rather than being confined to the acquisition of grammar and phonology. The underlying assumption in both cases is that the more communicative systems that an individual controls the better. Individuals who master more than one system have added flexibility which permits them to function in more than one cultural setting. In the pluralistic reality of modern America, this flexibility can only be an asset. In fact, under ideal conditions, even dominant culture children would be taught alternate

behavior systems to provide them with maximal cultural adaptability. The more individuals in America who can operate in more than one sociolinguistic framework, the more cross-cultural cooperation and understanding would be possible.

The parallel system proposal recognizes that all cultures have worth and that the suppression or extinction of any one of America's subcultures impoverishes America as a whole. It also recognizes the psychological need to possess an identity and to have pride in that identity. Whenever children are prohibited from exhibiting behavior that they closely associate with home and community, they receive an implicit rejection and negative evaluation of themselves. To bolster cultural pride and self-concept, the sociolinguistic systems of minority children must have a place in their classroom.

However the parallel system or multicultural approach does not deny that a dominant American culture exists, and it recognizes the need for America's youth to learn the behavior patterns of those in positions of power and authority. The ability to control the sociolinguistic system of the dominant culture is vital for a minority child's access to social and economic upward mobility. For the reasons mentioned: maximal flexibility and adaptability, cultural pride, and upward mobility, the teacher in the bilingual/bidialectal classroom should strive to develop two parallel systems.

As the students become older and more sophisticated and as their knowledge of the dominant cultural system expands through school experience, more emphasis can be placed on adherence to dominant cultural norms in the classroom. In the middle and upper elementary grades, teachers can begin to demand dominant culture patterns of speech, nonverbal behavior, and audience participation to a greater and greater degree, although it is imperative that opportunities to employ the native system be maintained during such activities as recess, free time, and other situations designated as appropriate. At no time should the children be made to feel that their system is inadequate or inferior. However, they must be made to realize that different patterns are appropriate in different situations and that the school setting and many other settings require adherence to the alternate system of the dominant culture. In other words, they must learn the rules of code switching.

These children must be made to realize that for successful communication outside their home environment they frequently have to employ alternate patterns of behavior, and teachers should encourage students to learn the new behaviors to prepare them for the outside world. So even though teachers are violating cultural norms by asking Asian-American children to speak out, volunteer ideas and opinions, debate, and question in the presence of an authority figure, these skills are necessary if these children are to succeed in American society.

Adherence to their own cultural patterns in the educational system or the business world will cause others to drastically underestimate their abilities. And even though teachers are asking black children to violate their cultural norms by requiring them to listen quietly to speakers and comment, question, and gesture only when that speaker indicates it is appropriate, black children need to learn these rules so that others in the outside world will not make negative judgments of their personalities.

To help the children acquire the dominant culture repertoire and its co-occurrence rules, some techniques can be borrowed from the natural acquisition process of the native sociolinguistic system. Experience is absolutely necessary, so teachers should strive to expose their students to a broad range of situations requiring a broad range of behaviors using the dominant culture system. Examples could be question and answer sessions, oral reports, listening to stories, etc. In these situations the dominant culture children could act as role models. If certain situations do not arise in the classroom, then films, fieldtrips, or stories can help to fill the void. Films of people speaking before large groups, field trips to places where children are required to interact with strange adults, stories that illustrate how authority figures should be addressed are examples. Role-playing activities can also be used to artificially create situations that do not naturally occur in the classroom and to provide the

children with opportunities to use behavior that they otherwise only observe in others. While behaviors can be learned through observing others, they can only be perfected through practice, and many children do not have any opportunities to practice dominant culture behavior outside the classroom because the cultural norms of their communities do not permit it.

At all times the teacher is a role model, illustrating dominant culture behavioral norms. Frequently the teacher, and occasionally classmates, provide direct instruction in dominant culture behavioral norms. For example, when a black child during a lesson is observed throwing out comments, talking to others, and exhibiting other behavior appropriate in the black culture but inappropriate in the dominant culture, the teacher may point out that in school listeners are expected to remain quiet when others are talking.

The key is to make it clear to the children that most classroom situations and many other situations that the children encounter in the outside world require adherence to dominant culture sociolinguistic rules. While ostensibly this fact would seem to override any attempts on the part of the teacher to emphasize the value of the minority culture, the negative impact can be assuaged if the teacher illustrates that all people must alter their behavior from situation to situation and that many communicative settings require even people from the dominant culture to employ strategies that they rarely if ever employ

at home. The use of formal academese, for example, is almost as foreign to the middle class white student as to the inner-city black student.

Besides the acquisition of two systems, one skill that minority children must acquire that dominant culture children need not, is the ability to code switch from native system to dominant culture system and to do so at appropriate times in appropriate situations. At first the children will make errors and inappropriately apply their own cultural framework to a situation requiring the alternate system. This may cause them to produce the wrong behavior or misinterpret the behavior of others. The well-informed teacher anticipates these problems and recognizes them when they occur. When inappropriate behavior or misunderstanding occurs in the classroom, the teacher will first analyze the situation to determine if sociolinguistic conflict is at fault. If such is the case, then the teacher will suppress the natural reaction to place blame on the children by interpreting their behavior through the teacher's sociolinguistic framework and will instead approach the situation with the intent to understand the children and help them develop skills to better handle the situation the next time it occurs.

For example, if black children are observed turning around and commenting to others while the teacher is talking, the teacher should identify this situation as one in which sociolinguistic conflict may be operating. If sociolinguistic conflict is at fault, the teacher will not interpret the behavior of the children as intentionally impolite

or disruptive. Rather the teacher will interpret the behavior as an attempt to show interest and will respond accordingly. This will eliminate the possibility of negative feelings developing between teacher and student. Then the teacher will attempt to expand the children's communicative competence by explaining that during a lesson they should sit still and be quiet until it is their turn to speak. The children can be told that such restraint is not necessary when talking informally with friends but is necessary in this particular situation. In this manner the children are not told that their way of behaving is bad. Rather they are told that it is not appropriate in the situation under discussion but may be appropriate elsewhere. This introduces the children to the co-occurrence rules of the dominant culture and gives them an idea of when to code switch.

In summary, cultures differ in the rules that govern communicative behavior, and the differences can cause teacher-pupil miscommunication in the classroom and can also interfere with the scholastic performance of minority children. These problems can be overcome, however, by knowledgeable and sensitive teachers who strive to build and expand the communicative competence of minority children. Teachers can accomplish this by building the native communicative system of the children and fostering ethnic identity and pride while simultaneously expanding the children's communicative skills to include those of the dominant cultures as well. To this end, teachers should provide a broad range of experiences to expose the children to the full repertoire of communica-

tive strategies and co-occurrence rules as they are defined by each culture, home and school. Teachers should also provide activities which expand the children's social sensitivity and metalinguistic awareness and afford opportunities to practice newly acquired dominant culture skills. The goal is to produce individuals who are capable of functioning in two realms and who feel comfortable in both. Success of our programs will be measured by the number of students who emerge from our educational system having strengthened rather than weakened their ties to their own ethnic group and who move from that strong footing to successfully compete in the dominant culture. In this process they will contribute parts of their culture to our American heritage which is enriched each time a minority group acquires the skills to flow with the main stream of American culture.

References

- Abrahams, R. D. The advantages of Black English. In J. S. DeStephano (Ed.), Language, society, and education: A Profile in Black English. Worthington, Ohio: Charles A. Jones Publishing Company, 1973.
- Applegate, R. B. The language teacher and the rules of speaking. TESOL Quarterly, 1975, 9, 271-281.
- Baratz, J. C. Educational considerations for teaching standard English to Negro children. In R. W. Fasold & R. W. Shuy (Eds.), Teaching standard English in the inner city. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970.
- Basso, K. H. To give up on words: Silence in Western Apache culture. In P. P. Giglioli (Ed.), Language and social context. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1979.
- Berwick, R. Staging classroom discussion. TESOL Quarterly, 1975, 9, 283-288.
- Birdwhistell, R. L. A kinetic-linguistic exercise: The cigarette scene. In R. L. Birdwhistell, Kinesics and context: Essays in body motion communication. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970.
- Brend, R. M. Politeness. International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 1978, 16, 253-6.
- Byers, P., & Byers, H. Nonverbal communication and the education of children. In C. B. Cazden, V. P. John & D. Hymes (Eds.),

Functions of language in the classroom. New York: Teachers College Press, 1972.

Case, R. Structures and strictures: Some functional limitations on the course of cognitive growth. Cognitive Psychology, 1974, 6, 544-573.

Ervin-Tripp, S. On sociolinguistic rules: Alternation and co-occurrence. In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Ervin-Tripp, S. Is Sybil There? The structure of some American English directives. Language in Society, 1976, 5, 25-66.

Gardner, H., Winner, Ed., Bochhofer, R., & Wolf, D. The development of figurative language. In K. E. Nelson, (Ed.), Children's language (Vol. 1). New York: Gardner Press, 1978.

Gumperz, J. Linguistic and social interaction in two communities. American Anthropologist, 1964, 66, 137-153.

Gumperz, J. J. & Hernández-Chavez, E. Bilingualism, bidialectalism, and classroom interaction. In C. B. Cazden, V. P. John & D. Hymes (Eds.), Functions of language in the classroom. New York: Teachers College Press, 1972.

Hymes, D. Functions of Speech: An evolutionary approach. In F. C. Gruber (Ed.), Anthropology and education. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961.

Hymes, D. Models of the interaction of language and social life.

In J. J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Johnson, K. Black kinesics - Some non-verbal communication patterns in the Black culture. Florida FL Reporter, 1971, 9, 17-20.

Johnson, K. Social backgrounds: Blacks. In T. D. Horn (Ed.), Reading for the disadvantaged: Problems of linguistically different learners. New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1970.

Kochman, T. Culture and communication: Implications for Black English in the classroom. Florida FL Reporter, 1969, 1, 89-92, 172-174.

Kochman, T. Cross-cultural communication: Contrasting perspectives, conflicting sensibilities. Florida FL Reporter, 1971, 9, 3-16, 53-54.

Kochman, T. Black American speech events and a language program for the classroom. In C. B. Cazden, V. P. John & D. Hymes (Eds.), Functions of language in the classroom. New York: Teachers College Press, 1972.

Labov, W. The logic of nonstandard English. Georgetown Monographs in Languages and Linguistics, 1969, 22, 26-31.

McDavid, R. I. The language of the city. Midcontinental American Studies Journal, 1969, 10, 47-59.

Miller, G. A. The magical number seven, plus-or-minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information. Psychological

Review, 1956, 63, 81-97.

Pasamanick, B., & Knobloch, H. Early language behavior in Negro children and the testing of intelligence. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1955, 50, 401-402.

Pascual-Leone, J. Cognitive development and cognitive style: A general psychological integration. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Geneva, 1969.

Piaget, J. The psychology of intelligence. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950.

Piaget, J. The language and thought of the child. New York: World Publishing Company, 1955.

Philips, S. Acquisition of roles for appropriate speech usage. In R. D. Abrahams & R. C. Troike (Eds.), Language and cultural diversity in American education. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972. (a)

Philips, S. Participant structures and communicative competence: Warm Springs children in community and classroom. In C. B. Cazden, V. P. John & D. Hymes (Eds.), Functions of language in the classroom. New York: Teachers College Press, 1972. (b)

Schefflen, A. E. How behavior means. New York: Anchor Press, 1974.

Shatzman, L., & Strauss, A. Social class modes of communication. American Journal of Sociology, 1955, 60, 329-338.

Williams, A. P. Dynamics of a Black audience. In T. Kochman (Ed.), Rappin' and stylin' out: Communication in urban Black America. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1972.